

MOTOR MOUTH

By
GEORGE FOWLER



IMAGE

HERE'S how the Seat Leon 2.0 FSI fares image-wise.

REAR MIRROR MONSTER: Creates the impression of a far larger car, with its Audi-style grille and huge slitty headlights. Trouble is, it's a Leon and it's way OTT.

BACKSIDE BEAUTY: Super-smart. Massive eye-shaped lights cut deep into the hatch, there's a big silver "S" badge that doubles as the boot handle and it sits on fat 16-inch alloys and a big twin exhaust.

PLAYTIME PLEASER: I'll say. Dual-zone climate control, trip computer, four electric windows, electric mirrors, central locking, CD-stereo with steering wheel controls.

NAUGHTY NIGGLES: Twin cup-holders rendered virtually useless by being sited next to the handbrake and behind the gear-lever. Tiny glovebox is not much more than a hand-book holder.

TASTY TOUCHES: Tall windscreen wipers invisibly park in slots down the side of the windscreen pillars. Map pocket in back of front passenger seat. Net pocket on left side of boot.

FAST OR LAST: Not exactly a stormer, especially from standstill, but if worked, the standard six-speed box makes it excellent in mid-range.

WONGA WONDER: Well equipped and with a big motor, it's three grand cheaper than the equivalent Golf. It's nowhere near as nice, but it's still a VW, which makes it good value.

WOULD AN ESSEX GIRL LIKE IT? Definitely not. Tracey plans to go clubbing, not to become a mum.

CLEAN MACHINE: Leon looks smart from every angle on the outside, but it all goes wrong once you get inside



the Seat

holders, or anything. Below this barren desert hangs a sagging mass of grey plastic dotted with black buttons around the CD-radio.

Even the instrument cluster that houses the speedo and rev-counter is set deep into a grey plastic binnacle. The instruments are in, you guessed it, black.

The seats are grey and black, and in the case of the car I drove they were trimmed in a deep red and black cloth.

Neat

In the back it gets even darker as the sloping roof comes down towards the top of your head. But at least there's stacks of leg room, while the door handles, hidden in the rear window pillar like an Alfa 156, are a neat touch.

The whole interior result, however, isn't good. You'd expect lots of silver trim to light it all up and make it racy, but apart from the door handles there's little joy.

Welcome to Dullsville, where the locals don't seem to have a lot to

spend. Driving this Leon isn't much better, either. Yep, it does everything it says on the box, but it's just not much fun.

It's reasonably quick from the lights, and surprisingly fast in mid-range, making it far too easy to hit a ton without realising it.

Sadly, though, it's all accompanied by a huge amount of road noise. Is this because of its stiff chassis and low-profiles reflecting every change of road surface? Or

has Seat - one of VW's budget badges - spent as much on sound-deadening as they appear to have on the interior?

Oh well, at least the steering is light and accurate and the road-holding is what you might call "tidy", provided you don't push too hard when it will suddenly fall away like a sky diver who forgot his parachute, which is quite scary.

Massive

I didn't like the new Leon from the moment I first drove it.

It's five inches longer and an inch wider and taller, which should leave a lot more room for improvement, but apart from a massive boot, which is five feet deep with the seats folded down, I can't find anything that I'd really warm to.

It's highly functional, brilliantly equipped and will no doubt prove as reliable as the robots that built it.

Sadly, though, this once smashing car also responds like a robot.

It's lost its little character, and that's sad.

FACT FILE

PRICE (on the road): £14,220. (range: £11,295 - £16,495).

ENGINE: 1,984cc, all-alloy, DOHC, 16-valve, with variable valve timing (180bhp, 152lb torque).

TOP SPEED: 128 mph; 0-62 mph: 8.8 secs.

MPG: Urban: 38.1; extra urban: 61.4; combined: 50.4.

CO₂: 197 g/km.

INS GROUP: 9.

It's a girl thing...

THE soft-top Mini One wouldn't beat a moped up a hill and has the road-holding of Bambi on a glacier. I hate it.

The Cooper is slightly faster, which lifts it from "disastrous" to "pathetic" while the Cooper S is OK - in a straight line.

However, that's just my opinion, so to be fair I arranged for Daily Star secretary Natasha Jones, 29, to drive a Cooper for a weekend.

So here's what she had to say. And it tells us everything we need to know about girls. They just want to have fun.

Over to you, Natasha: "I loved it. I completely, utterly, adored it.

"I can't tell you how much I so, so, want this car. It made me feel wonderful. Did I try it

out for speed? What do you mean? Look, girls don't drive like you.

"The roof goes down easily. The interior is smart and I love the old fashion-style dials.

"Oh, it's so cute. I

can't fault it in any way. It's definitely worth the money. It's very quick and is a real head turner. A real girly car!

"It's got a little character all of its own." Girls know nothing.



CONVERTED: Natasha and roofless Mini

Bargain bye

PEUGEOT have loaded up the goodies and dropped prices at the same time on their 206 range in advance of the model being replaced by the 207 around next April.

It means, of course, that there are some tidy little deals to be had. All 1.1-litre versions have been axed, with the range now starting at £8,195 for

a 1.4-litre "Urban" edition. Next up is the "Verve" range, starting at £9,295, which is followed by this very smart 1.4-litre, two-door "Sport" model pictured below.

It features air-con, tasty full body colour-coding, central locking, leccy windows, heated electric door mirrors, foglights (don't look thick, they're for when it's foggy), leather-trimmed steering wheel, a flash "sports" interior with lots of aluminium trim, "sports" bumpers and these stylish 15-inch alloys.

How's that for £10,195? Good value, I'd say.



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IF your motor lets you down this winter you'd put money on the fault being a flat battery. And that's because this is the cause of a massive 20% of all breakdowns, and with the threat of Britain's worst winter for 50 years looming, now would be a good time to give yours a health check.

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I've got a fantastic five of the very latest Sparkrite Booster and Starter chargers just waiting to be won.

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Cornwall says: "Booster chargers can cost anything up to £200, so this is a real bargain. It will produce up to a huge 36 amps of power in one go, so you'll soon be on the move.

"It will also charge a totally flat battery 10 times faster than a lot of chargers and is really easy to use." Want one? Phone 0905 028 0202 and leave your name, address and answer to the question: "What's the biggest cause of car breakdowns?" Calls cost 25p on a BT landline. Or text DSMOTOR followed by your name and details to 61616. Texts

cost 25p plus your network rates. Winners will be chosen at random by midnight next Thursday.

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MOTORMOUTH EXTRA

HELLO CAMPER:

The VW California gives five-star luxury on the road and off it



IT'S HOTEL CALIFORNIA

IF a massive motorhome is too much for you, and towing a caravan more of a chore than a treat, then how about this? It's the new VW California, which is a posh version of campers' favourite the Caravelle.

For a mere £34,000, - £7,000 more than a Caravelle - you get real five-star treatment. Standard kit includes a massive 42-litre fridge, a 30-litre fresh water container, twin gas-burners, six-disc, eight-speaker, CD-stereo, air-con and extra heating inside the cabin.

There's also a lightweight alloy table, with two folding chairs that store in the tailgate along with lots of cupboards and drawers and even double glazing in what VW call "the living area".

As you can see, the roof folds up to give more light and height, while there's also the option of an 8ft 2in wide awning which folds out of the roof for an extra £329 to be precise, which is what the Germans are.

Two engine choices are a 32 mpg 2.5-litre, 112 bhp, five-cylinder, turbo diesel or the same engine boosted up to 170 bhp and with superior fuel consumption of 33 mpg, which shows you that these days more power is the result of more efficiency, which means using less fuel.

Can't wait to try one out..



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We HATE the world

NOTHING'S ALL-WHITE FOR VAN MAN

RUDE by name, rude by nature ... that's how most folk see White Van Man.

In fact, it's actually time we all said a big "aaah" for one of Britain's most despised drivers.

And that's because these poor little lambs aren't horrible at all.

Oh no. Sometimes they can be a bit irritable, but it's only because they're "stressed".

Traffic jams, speed cameras, taxi drivers. You name it. They get wound up.

White Van Man has been given the chance to tell his side of the story in a nationwide survey by car and truck rental outfit Ryder.

Jams

A massive 80% of drivers say conditions have become increasingly stressful over the past three years.

Traffic jams caused by the sheer volume of traffic on the roads was the top complaint, followed by road works (64%), parking restrictions (47%) and speed cameras (46%).

Next up was taxi drivers at 45%. One delivery driver said: "Who do they think they are? They cut in front, jump queues and push in at the last minute."

Pressure to deliver goods on time (36%) was also a big problem, followed by bus drivers (29%) and women drivers (21%).

Other complaints were: "People who don't indicate"; "School run



TOP 10 CAR SALES

OCTOBER

1	Ford Focus	9,534
2	Vauxhall Astra	7,369
3	Renault Mégane	7,021
4	Ford Fiesta	5,247
5	VW Golf	4,675
6	Vauxhall Corsa	4,197
7	Ford Mondeo	3,993
8	Peugeot 206	3,714
9	VW Polo	3,362
10	VW Passat	3,275

2005

1	Ford Focus	126,567
2	Vauxhall Astra	93,446
3	Vauxhall Corsa	79,457
4	Renault Mégane	76,737
5	Ford Fiesta	73,009
6	Peugeot 206	61,138
7	VW Golf	58,492
8	Renault Clio	52,064
9	Ford Mondeo	50,780
10	Mini	38,762

Source: SMMT

mums"; "4x4 drivers crawling around taking up two lanes"; "Middle lane motorway drivers".

Finally, and here's a shock: "Other road users."

To deal with the stress, White Van Man admits to a number of techniques which are now familiar to

many of us. One in three admit shouting and swearing, 14% make hand gestures or beep their horn and 11% actually "scream".

More worryingly for their health, 28% smoke while just one in five play their favourite music to help them calm down.

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LET ME BE YOUR VANTASY!

**DAILY
STAR**

TRADESMEN are spending more and more on transport, from the smallest microvans to the largest panel vans and pick-ups and as a result sales for vans were up 8.5 per cent last year, from just over 300,000 to nearly 330,000.

With increased sales comes an increase in choice and whether you are looking to buy, lease or hire a van it's important that you choose the right one for your business needs. You need to make sure the van can cope with the load you intend to carry. The doors need to be wide and high enough for your cargo and you need to ensure your goods will remain stable once it's loaded up. For most drivers their van is also their office so comfort and safety are also important factors to consider.

Microvans are the smallest commercial vehicles available. Based on a car but without the back seats they're nippy, economical, practical, easy to park and great to drive. The Ford Fiesta

Van is popular and has great headroom and legroom and 1.013 cu.m load space. The Peugeot 206 Van looks stylish and includes power steering and excellent safety and security features. Other models in this category include the Fiat Punto, Renault Clio, Vauxhall Corsa van and Citroen's C2 Enterprise.

Next up are the small vans that typically have 3.0cu m of carrying space and can move weights of around 500 - 800kg. The Renault Kangoo has the option of one or two side loading doors, power steering, central locking and a traditional design. In contrast Vauxhall's Astravan Sportive looks like a three-door estate car, no side access but is popular thanks to its superb handling.

Mid range vans are growing in popularity and include the Mercedes-Benz Vito, Citroen Dispatch and Fiat Scudo. Generally these vans have load bays of around 5.0cu m to 6.0cu m. The Renault Traffic and Vauxhall Vivaro are similar

in appearance. Both are cost effective to maintain and a six-speed gearbox is available on some models.

Next up are the large panel vans with an all-up weight of up to 3.5 tonnes with cargo areas of 13cu m to 14cu m or maybe more! Choose from a Ford Transit, a Volkswagen LT35 or something from the Mercedes Sprinter range. LDV's Maxus largest model can hold a massive 1.6 tonnes with a 11.4 cu m load box and is complete with ABS and EBD (Electronic Brake Force Distribution.)

Of course once you start carrying larger loads you have to be increasingly careful about keeping your cargo stable when you are driving. Most small vans can be

ordered with a bulkhead, just incase you have to stop in a hurry! Bott Ltd. is one company that specialise in manufacturing and installing in-vehicle storage equipment including floors, side-linings, bulkheads and roof racks. They also specialise in lockable drawers and under floor drawer units, electrical and ancillary equipment, including power generation systems, hazard and task lighting and security products, hand-wash units and navigation and tracking systems.

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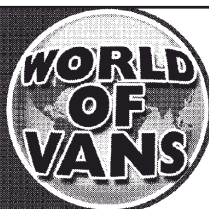
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TOP TRAINERS

(with runners) M Pipe 72 winners, (13% strike rate), £42,790, P Nicholls 44, (16%), £18,320, P Hobbs 22, (10%), £33,133, Jonjo O'Neill 21, (13%), £7,071, N Henderson 15, (10%), £43,750, M Twiston-Davies 10, (6%), £109,840, Miss V Williams 9, (8%), £42,422, F Murphy 6, (8%), £35,500

TOP JOCKEYS

(with mounts) A P McCoy 60 winners, (22% strike rate), £34,080, R Walsh 34, (17%), £38,300, T J Murphy 30, (15%), £79,070, R Johnson 26, (14%), £25,150, B Geraghty 13, (15%), £31,225, C Llewellyn 10, (6%), £88,840, J Tizzard 6, (9%), £16,117, Mr J T McNamara 6, (32%), £28,000

CH4 1.15 ANGLO IRISH BARN NOVICES HURDLE

Gd2 (8 flights) 2m1/4 (10 runners) £17,106

BUENA VISTA (118)(D,F,G) T J Murphy *119

FRENCH ACCORDION (40)(D,F,S) P Nicholls 108

NATAL (175)(D,F,G,T) R Walsh 87

RIMSKY (20)(D,G,S) C Llewellyn 92

N-Twiston-Davies 4 11 7 C Llewellyn 92

TWO MILES WEST (13)(D,S) A P McCoy 82

Jono O'Neill 4 11 7 A P McCoy 82

BOYCHUCK (24)(D,F,S) R Johnson 84

CROW WOOD (22)(B,F,D,G) R Garrity 113

J Quinn 6 11 0 R Garrity 113

OFF SPIN (195)(D,S) P R Webber 5 11 0 T Doyle

LAGO D'ORO (16)(F) T Doyle

Mr Pritchard 5 11 0 T J Phelan 62

MICHAEL DIAMOND (F158) D J Phelan 62

Dr Joseph Fitzgerald 6 10 7 Mr J P Farrell

2004: Marcel, 4-11-7, T J Murphy, 5-11 M Pipe, 9 ran.

STARFORM: BUENA VISTA Danger: Boychuck

paddy power.com HANDICAP CHASE (E)amateurs (19 fences) 3m1/4 (9 run) £10,534

LORD WO (13)(D,S,B) Mr J T McNamara 110

WILLIE JOHN DALY (19)(D,G,S) Mr T Greenall 111

FASGO (355)(D,G,S) Mr C J Sweeney *123

GETOUTWHENYOU CAN (82)(D,F,G,S) M Pipe 111

M Pipe 111 Mr R Quinn (7) 96

BEE AN BEE (13)(D,G,S,B) R Walsh 87

T George 8 11 2 Mr R McCarthy (7) 121

YOU OWE ME (11)(D,G,S) Mr G Tumulty (7) 86

N-Twiston-Davies 8 11 2 Mr G Tumulty (7) 86

DIX VILLEZ (79)(F) Mr A FitzGerald 111

P Nolan (RE) 6 10 12 Mr A FitzGerald 111

JIVER (15)(G,S) M Scudamore 96

M Scudamore 96 Miss N Carberry

MAMIDEOS (209)(D,F,G,S,T) Mr J Snowden (3) 100

T George 8 10 10 Mr J Snowden (3) 100

Star Betting:— 3 Getoutwhenyoucan, 9-2 You Owe Me, 6 Bee An Bee, 13-2 Dix Villez, 7 Willie John Daly, 8 Jiver, 10 Fasgo, 12 others.

2004: Smiley Pleeze, 12-10-11, (Mr L Stephens), 16-11 M Sheppard, 12 ran.

GETOUTWHENYOU CAN two Irish points earlier this year and impressed with his jumping when making a winning bow over fences by 31 rec 4lb from Windy Spirit (Newcastle 2001) 10yds Class Dipod-firm in August. He could take high rank among the stayers and can follow up at the main expense of You Owe Me who won a novice only once in his tance on his chasing bow in May and then jumped well taking on class act and eventual winner Iris's Gift for the lead before beginning to weaken and ending four out in a CD nov ch 16 days ago.

STARFORM: GETOUTWHENYOU CAN Dgr: You Owe Me

CH4 2.25 BEARDS JEWELLERS CUP H'CAP CHASE (B) (12 fences) 2m (10 runners) £17,022

ARMATURK (13)(D,D9,F,G,S) P Nicholls 135

SEEBALD (19)(D,D2,C,D4,F,G,S) T Scudamore *142

ANDREAS (20)(B,F,D,D3,F,G,T) R Walsh 125

FULL IRISH (174)(D,G,S) J Crowley 133

L Lingo 9 10 11 J Crowley 133

MADE IN JAPAN (209)(C,D2,G,S,B) R Johnson 125

P Hobbs 5 10 10 R Johnson 125

BAMBI DE L'ORME (188)(D,F,G) A P McCoy 133

I Williams 6 10 9 A P McCoy 133

TYSOU (238)(D,B,F,G,S) M Foley 115

N Henderson 8 10 M Foley 115

TIGER CRY (20)(D,G,S) D J Casey 132

A L Moore (RE) 7 10 2 D J Casey 132

ONE CORNETTO (17)(D,F,S) L Aspell 115

L Wells 6 10 1 L Aspell 115

BOLD BISHOP (17)(D3,F,S) B Harding 126

Jono O'Neill 8 10 10 B Harding 126

Star Betting:— 3 Andreas, 4 Bambi De L'Orme, 5 Armatark, 6 Tysou, 13-2 Tiger Cry, 8 Full Irish, 10 Bold Bishop, 14 Made in Japan, 16 Seebald, 33 One Cornetto 2004: Armatark, 7-1-14, (Christian Williams), 11-2 P Nicholls, 11 ran.

ANDREAS can quickly regain winning ways. He looked potentially very smart when hacking up in a h'cap here in April (only his second outing over fences), and caught a tartar on his return from a break when beaten 21 going 7lb to Baby Turk (Antree 2m 1st nov ch yielding) last month. Bambi De L'Orme ran well without any luck last winter gaining a thorough undeserved success when beating River City (gave 10lb) by a nk (Warwick 2m10yds B firm) in May. He acts on any ground and will enjoy the services of Tony McCoy. Armatark showed admirable

STARFORM: ANDREAS Danger: Bambi De L'Orme

battling qualities again to give Bleu Superbe 18lb and a 2lb beating (Lingfield 2m 1st ch yielding) 13 days ago. That was his first success since beating Wall Chief (rec 1lb) by a nd in last year's renewal of this contest on a yielding ground in which Tysou (10 lb better off) finished 14 away in 3rd. Bold Bishop looked sure to win going (B) on soft going and (A) on the all weather. The figures in the last column after the jockey's name is an exclusive Clockwork rating giving a guide to the horse's chance. The highest figure denotes the top rated, which is also pinpointed by a *

TONY LEWIS

1.15 CROW WOOD

1.50 GETOUTWHENYOU CAN

2.25 BAMBI DE L'ORME

3.00 SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

3.35 CELTIC SON

4.10 ASTYANAX (nb)

STAR BETTING: 45 Newcastle (Dovonade) (nb); 3.00 Spot The Difference (treble); 4.20 (Wolverhampton) Cardinal Venture (nap).

CLOCKWORK: 2.25 Seebald 1st win.

ROTTWEILER: 1.15 Buena Vista 1.50 Getoutwhenyoucan 2.25 Armatark 3.00 Oh My Lord 3.35 Church Island 4.10 Mouseski

GOING: Good to Soft-Soft in Places

CROSS COUNTRY: Good-Good to Soft in Places

JACKPOT: & PLACEPO: First six races.

TRACKFACTS

The new left-hand oval course has ten stiff fences with seven hurdles per circuit. On the new track the last half-mile is all uphill with a run-in of 237yds.

CH4 3.00 SPORTING INDEX CROSS COUNTRY CHASE (B) (32 fences) 3m7f (14 runners) £18,789

GOOD STEP (11)(S) C O'Dwyer 82

E Bolger (RE) 7 11 8 D N Russell 91

IL DE BOITRON (199)(S) D N Russell 91

LORD JACK (19)(S) B Harding 102

N Richards 9 11 8 B Harding 102

LUZACUDDO (33)(S,B) A O'Keefe 100

F Murphy 12 11 8 A O'Keefe 100

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE (19)(D3,G,S) Mr J T McNamara 86

E Bolger (RE) 12 11 8 Mr J T McNamara 86

GRUMPY STUMPY (20)(B,F,G,S) C Llewellyn 83

N-Twiston-Davies 10 11 5 C Llewellyn 83

NATIVE RAY (11)(S) D J Casey 95

N-Twiston-Davies 10 11 5 D J Casey 95

WILDFIELD RUFO (40)(F,G,S,P) J Crowley 107

Mrs K Walton 10 11 5 J Crowley 107

HAPPY HUSSAR (17)(F,G,S) Dr P Pritchard 86

Dr P Pritchard 12 11 2 Dr P Pritchard 86

MULTI TALENTED (166)(G,S) Mr J Morgan 104

L Wells 9 11 2 Mr J Morgan 104

OH MY LORD (22)(B,F,S,T) Denis O'Regan 82

P Nolan (RE) 6 11 2 Denis O'Regan 82

PARDINI (13)(S) S Stronge 83

M Harris 6 11 2 S Stronge 83

L'AVENTURE (20)(G,S,T) P J Brennan *140

P Nicholls 6 10 12 P J Brennan *140

HISTORG (265)(C,S) F Murphy 10 10 10 F Murphy 109

Star Betting:— 11-4 Spot The Difference, 4 L'Adventure, 6 Good Step, 8 Oh My Lord, 10 Luzacuddo, 12 Lord Jack, 14 others.

2004: Spot The Difference, 11-11-8, (Mr J T McNamara), 6-11 E Bolger (RE), 16 ran.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE has become a specialist round this cross country course winning last year's renewal and beating Luzacuddo (now 13lb worse off) by 2-1 over CD Class B h'cap ch yielding at the Festival in March.

The selection made a highly satisfactory reappearance when mid-division in a Clonmel h'dle last month, and will be hard to beat. Lord Jack also had a warm-up over timber last month when 5th to Jordanabed at Antree. He didn't go on as expected last term after giving Gateford 16lb and an 8lb beating (Kelso 3m1f h'cap ch/soft).

STARFORM: SPOT THE DIFFERENCE Danger: Lord Jack

3.35 STEEL PLATE AND SECTIONS NOVICES' CHASE Class B (19 fences) 3m1/4 (7 runners) £10,428

CELTIC SON (6)(D4,G,S,T) T J Murphy *101

M Pipe 6 11 8 T J Murphy *101

CHURCH ISLAND (19)(D,F,S) Denis O'Regan 101

M Hourigan (RE) 6 11 8 Denis O'Regan 101

RED GEORGIE (20)(D2,G,S) C Llewellyn 55

N-Twiston-Davies 7 11 5 C Llewellyn 55

BATTLING BUSTER (1343) B Hitchcott

R Buckler 8 11 0 B Hitchcott

BLUE BUSINESS (24)(B,F,D,D,G,S,G) R Walsh 53

E Bolger (RE) 11 10 1 R Walsh 53

BOB BOBBIN (13)(B,F,S) J Tizzard 84

C L Tizzard 6 11 0 J Tizzard 84

FISHERMAN JACK (600)(D5,G,S) J Mogford

G Smith 10 11 0 J Mogford

Star Betting:— 8-11 Celtic Son, 11-2 Blue Business, 13-2 Bob Bob Bobbin, 7 Church Island, 15-2 Red Georgie, 50 Fisherham Jack, 66 Battling Buster, 2004: Compoly Or Die, 5-11-7, (T J Murphy, EVENS) Van R, M Pipe, 7 ran.

STARFORM: CELTIC SON Danger: Red Georgie

4.10 CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HANDICAP HURDLE Class E (10 flights) 2m5f (24 runners) £9,582

ANATAR (17)(D,G,S) P Nicholls 119

A Glassborough (B) 85

MOUSESKI (9)(B,F,C,D,G,S) P Nicholls 119

L Heard (B) *107

NASSARO (34)(B,F,C,S,T) M Halliord (RE) 5 11 9 T G M Ryan 106

KILGOWAN (224)(D,G,S) Williams 6 11 9 O Hynes 96

P-41023 MICHAELS DREAM (19)(G,S,B) N Wilson 6 11 7 T J Dwyer (P) 104

F-01023 NEWTOWN DANCER (33)(F,S,T) P Hogan (RE) 6 11 7 D Flannery (G) 87

BETTER THINK AGAIN (26)(S) Susan A Finn (RE) 11 11 6 W J Lee

122111 LORD OF ILLUSION (314)(G,F,S) T George 8 11 5 P O'Neill

0435-F MONTEVIDEO (69) Jonjo O'Neill 5 11 5 M P Walsh

042-082 DOUBLED DIZZY (16) R Buckler 4 11 5 S M McGovern (G) 99

051-044 OXYBUA (22)(D,G,S) P Nicholls 11 11 5 S Walsh (G) 75

222-144 WATER KING (34)(D,G) R Stronge 6 11 4 S Walsh (G) 75

01P1-PS CAN EAGLE (24)(D,G,S) B Miss V Williams 6 11 4 L Treadwell (G) 92

15-160 ALLSTAR LEADER (40)(F) Michael Joseph Fitzgerald 6 11 3 J M Allen (G) 103

F-45-2 HELM (28) R Rowe 4 11 2 S O'Connell (G) 104

6345-01 ASTYANAX (22)(D,F) N Henderson 5 10 13 S O'Connell (G) 104

20-012 MISS SKIPPY (36)(F) A Newcombe 6 10 12 P Merrigan (G) 97

18-20222 MARTINIC (19)(B,F) S Bailey 5 10 11 S O'Connell (G) 104

0630-07 TAKE A DROP (104)(G,S) S O'Connell (RE) 10 10 10 S G McDermott (G) 32

1-2204 ARGENT OU OR (9)(G) M Pipe 4 10 10 T J Malone (G) 86

21 RP-201 PARDON MY DANCE (19)(G,S) S Lynch 9 10 10 T J Phelan 104

23322-26 SIR WALTER (19)(G,S) D Burchell 12 10 8 A Poggson (G) 92

2315-00 GOOD THYNE JACK (53)(S) E McNamara (RE) 7 10 6 B C Byrnes (G) 94

24-06334 MOUFTARI (19)(B,C) Bymers (RE) 4 10 5 M F Ferris (G) 86

Star Betting:— 6 Mouseski, 13-2 Lord Of Illusion, 8 Astyanax, 12 Double Dizzy, Helm, 14 Nassaro, Newtown Dancer, Montevideo, 16 others.

2004: Hordago, 4-10-1, (B Byrnes), 33-1 E McNamara (RE), 24 ran.

STARFORM: MOUSESKI Danger: Martovic

KEY TO THE CARDS: our racecards are designed to give you a better, easier to understand guide to the races. The figures in brackets after each horse's name indicate the number in Flat races. Figures in brackets after each horse's name indicate the number of days since the horse last ran. (C) indicates a course winner, (D) indicates a winner over the same distance as today's race, (B) or (V) indicates that the horse wears blinkers or a visor. (T) indicates that the horse wears a tongue strap. * indicates if wearing blinkers or visor for first time. (P) indicates that the horse is wearing a Cheek Piece, (BF) stands for beaten favourite. (F) is winner on firm going, (S) on soft going and (A) on the all weather. The figures in the last column after the jockey's name is an exclusive Clockwork rating giving a guide to the horse's chance. The highest figure denotes the top rated, which is also pinpointed by a *

STAR TIP

1.15 BUENA VISTA

1.50 DIX VILLEZ

2.25 ARMATURK

3.00 SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

3.35 CELTIC SON

4.10 OXYBUA

STAR BETTING: 45 Newcastle (Dovonade) (nb); 3.00 Spot The Difference (treble); 4.20 (Wolverhampton) Cardinal Venture (nap).

CLOCKWORK: 2.25 Seebald 1st win.

ROTTWEILER: 1.15 Buena Vista 1.50 Getoutwhenyoucan 2.25 Armatark 3.00 Oh My Lord 3.35 Church Island 4.10 Mouseski

GOING: Good to Soft-Soft in Places

CROSS COUNTRY: Good-Good to Soft in Places

JACKPOT: & PLACEPO: First six races.

TRACKFACTS

The new left-hand oval course has ten stiff fences with seven hurdles per circuit. On the new track the last half-mile is all uphill with a run-in of 237yds.

CH4 3.00 SPORTING INDEX CROSS COUNTRY CHASE (B) (32 fences) 3m7f (14 runners) £18,789

GOOD STEP (11)(S) C O'Dwyer 82

E Bolger (RE) 7 11 8 D N Russell 91

IL DE BOITRON (199)(S) D N Russell 91

LORD JACK (19)(S) B Harding 102

N Richards 9 11 8 B Harding 102

LUZACUDDO (33)(S,B) A O'Keefe 100

F Murphy 12 11 8 A O'Keefe 100

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE (19)(D3,G,S) Mr J T McNamara 86

E Bolger (RE) 12 11 8 Mr J T McNamara 86

GRUMPY STUMPY (20)(B,F,G,S) C Llewellyn 83

N-Twiston-Davies 10 11 5 C Llewellyn 83

NATIVE RAY (11)(S) D J Casey 95

N-Twiston-Davies 10 11 5 D J Casey 95

WILDFIELD RUFO (40)(F,G,S,P) J Crowley 107

Mrs K Walton 10 11 5 J Crowley 107

HAPPY HUSSAR (17)(F,G,S) Dr P Pritchard 86

Dr P Pritchard 12 11 2 Dr P Pritchard 86

MULTI TALENTED (166)(G,S) Mr J Morgan 104

L Wells 9 11 2 Mr J Morgan 104

OH MY LORD (22)(B,F,S,T) Denis O'Regan 82

P Nolan (RE) 6 11 2 Denis O'Regan 82

PARDINI (13)(S) S Stronge 83

M Harris 6 11 2 S Stronge 83

L'AVENTURE (20)(G,S,T) P J Brennan *140

P Nicholls 6 10 12 P J Brennan *140

HISTORG (265)(C,S) F Murphy 10 10 10 F Murphy 109

Star Betting:— 11-4 Spot The Difference, 4 L'Adventure, 6 Good Step, 8 Oh My Lord, 10 Luzacuddo, 12 Lord Jack, 14 others.

2004: Spot The Difference, 11-11-8, (Mr J T McNamara), 6-11 E Bolger (RE), 16 ran.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE has become a specialist round this cross country course winning last year's renewal and beating Luzacuddo (now 13lb worse off) by 2-1 over CD Class B h'cap ch yielding at the Festival in March.

The selection made a highly satisfactory reappearance when mid-division in a Clonmel h'dle last month, and will be hard to beat. Lord Jack also had a warm-up over timber last month when 5th to Jordanabed at Antree. He didn't go on as expected last term after giving Gateford 16lb and an 8lb beating (Kelso 3m1f h'cap ch/soft).

STARFORM: SPOT THE DIFFERENCE Danger: Lord Jack

3.35 STEEL PLATE AND SECTIONS NOVICES' CHASE Class B (19 fences) 3m1/4 (7 runners) £10,428

CELTIC SON (6)(D4,G,S,T) T J Murphy *101

M Pipe 6 11 8 T J Murphy *101

CHURCH ISLAND (19)(D,F,S) Denis O'Regan 101

M Hour

British Greyhound Racing Board

ROMFORD TONIGHT

RONNIE BOSS (7.30) should be given the key to Romford Stadium as Mark Wallis' out and out sprinter, boasts a superb strike rate round the Essex venue.

He regularly kicks off the Friday night's open race action and should add another win to his tally by landing the spoils in the opener once again. The striped jacket is perfect, and he can quicken up nicely on the dash to the first turn, to put the issue beyond any doubt.

Fear Assassin (3.48) showed his class to win the Puppy Cup over c&d last month and confirmed his liking for this tight 400m trip when bolting up in a one off open last time.

The February 2004 Son of Borna Pilot is far from the finished article and looks a really nice prospect for Mark Wallis. The wider draw

by **JIM AUSTIN** of the **RACING POST**

shouldn't pose any problems, and his superior early foot can see him land the four timer.

Rio Jimmy also reached the Puppy Cup Final and is improving with more experience. He looks an obvious danger clad in red, but has yet to fully master the art of trapping and may have to take another back seat behind the selection.

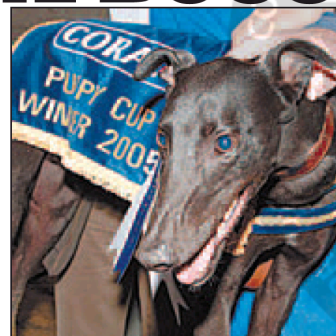
Flame Of Hope (10.08) saw his winning run ended at the paws of bitter rival Buckland

Wally over 400m last week, but Patsy Cusack's speedy type can be forgiven the odd blip and normal service should be resumed. He copes with a midfield location well and his potent second to third pace can see him come through to head them off approaching the third turn.

Buzz

Denmarkmark (10.24) gave connections a real buzz when landing the Champion Stakes Final in July. However, he hasn't performed to that level of late and the return to 575m might not have the desired effect. His draw outside Tinopener is fraught with danger, and the latter can use that to his advantage. Having won his last couple of outings in bold fashion, he should prove tough to contain if matching his rivals in the early exchanges.

The getting out stakes over 750m looks a tricky race to solve. With six railers in the line up, there could be plenty of jostling for positions on the opening circuit.



READY TO STRIKE: Fear Assassin

Chakalak Attack (10.40) has yet to win beyond 575m, but Dave Mullins' bitch has performed well behind the likes of Star Of Dromin and Bethan Pebbles over c&d in recent weeks, to suggest she can make it pay in this level. She has won half the battle off the track, by drawing the red box. Hopefully, that can enable her to steer clear of any early crowding and make a telling move on the opening lap.

SUNDERLAND TIPS		
7.35 LAMBEY DRUMMER (2)	Foxdale Kite (5)	
7.51 BLUETOON PAM (1)	Linton Lasso (3)	
8.06 YELLOW SHOT (5)	Deoxy Holly (3)	
8.22 ELBON GNOW (5)	Cooloomat Magic (4)	
8.37 CRAFTY MAMA (1)	Rattalia Netley (2)	
8.53 ANACOTTY STAR (1)	Purduhams Pride (2)	
9.08 KELVEY POLLY (6)	Leedsford Moll (3)	
9.23 DUNSILLY CHIEF (6)	Blackwood (3)	
9.38 TITVETS VENTURE (5)	Balmacdoe Lass (1)	
9.53 SAPITA SKULL (1)	Dells Princess (6)	
10.08 LANDING RUMBLE (1)	Seans Jenny (2)	
10.24 BARWISIE MAGIC (6)	Craan Eric (3)	

YOUR AFTERNOON BAGS CARDS WITH BEST HINTS

WIMBLEDON			WALTHAMSTOW			MONMORE			SWINDON		
11.26 (A6)	460m		11.26 (A7)	475m		11.26 (A5)	480m		11.26 (A6)	480m	
1434 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1211 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1211 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1211 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1435 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1212 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1212 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1212 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1436 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1213 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1213 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1213 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1437 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1214 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1214 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1214 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1438 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1215 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1215 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1215 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1439 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1216 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1216 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1216 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1440 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1217 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1217 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1217 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1441 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1218 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1218 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1218 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1442 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1219 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1219 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1219 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1443 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1220 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1220 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1220 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1444 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1221 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1221 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1221 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1445 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1222 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1222 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1222 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1446 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1223 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1223 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1223 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1447 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1224 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1224 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1224 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1448 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1225 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1225 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1225 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1449 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1226 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1226 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1226 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1450 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1227 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1227 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1227 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1451 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1228 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1228 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1228 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1452 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1229 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1229 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1229 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1453 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1230 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1230 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1230 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1454 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1231 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1231 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1231 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1455 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1232 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1232 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1232 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1456 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1233 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1233 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1233 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1457 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1234 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1234 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1234 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1458 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1235 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1235 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1235 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1459 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1236 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1236 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1236 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1460 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1237 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1237 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1237 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1461 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1238 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1238 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1238 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1462 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1239 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1239 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1239 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1463 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1240 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1240 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1240 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1464 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1241 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1241 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1241 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1465 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1242 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1242 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1242 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1466 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1243 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1243 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1243 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1467 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1244 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1244 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1244 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1468 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1245 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1245 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1245 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1469 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1246 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1246 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1246 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1470 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1247 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1247 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1247 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1471 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1248 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1248 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1248 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1472 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1249 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1249 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1249 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1473 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1250 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1250 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1250 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1474 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1251 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1251 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1251 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1475 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1252 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1252 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1252 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1476 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1253 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1253 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1253 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1477 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1254 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1254 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1254 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1478 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1255 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1255 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1255 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1479 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1256 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1256 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1256 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1480 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1257 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1257 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1257 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1481 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1258 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1258 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1258 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1482 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1259 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1259 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1259 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1483 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1260 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1260 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1260 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1484 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1261 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1261 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1261 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1485 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1262 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1262 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1262 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1486 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1263 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1263 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1263 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1487 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1264 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1264 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1264 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1488 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1265 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1265 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1265 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1489 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1266 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1266 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1266 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1490 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1267 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1267 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1267 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1491 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1268 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1268 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1268 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1492 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1269 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1269 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1269 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1493 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1270 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1270 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1270 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1494 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1271 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1271 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1271 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1495 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1272 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1272 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1272 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1496 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1273 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1273 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1273 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1497 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1274 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1274 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1274 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1498 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1275 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1275 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1275 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1499 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1276 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1276 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1276 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1500 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1277 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1277 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1277 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1501 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1278 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1278 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1278 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1502 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1279 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1279 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1279 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1503 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1280 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1280 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1280 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1504 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1281 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1281 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1281 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1505 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1282 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1282 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1282 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1506 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1283 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1283 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1283 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1507 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1284 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1284 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1284 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1508 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1285 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1285 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1285 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
1509 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1286 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1286 Milla Thud (r)	28.57		1286 Milla Thud (r)	28.57	
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1533 Milla Thud (r)	28.										

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- Q: What are deposit bonuses?
- A: A deposit bonus is money offered by most of the major online casinos to encourage you to sign up. The offer is genuine but is always related to certain conditions. A typical condition would be you must wager the value of the bonus twenty five times before you can withdraw the bonus offered. If the conditions are met, and all the sites have fairly similar restrictions, the payment is real and can be withdrawn.
- Q: I've noticed card values are different in Red Dog Poker. Can you set them out for me?
- A: The cards two through to ten inclusive are worth their face value. However, a Jack is worth eleven; a Queen, twelve; a King, thirteen; and an Ace, fourteen.
- Q: Do you have any tips for Red Dog Poker?
- A: Yes! Bet when the spread is seven cards or more. If you watch the "marker" on the board you'll see the spread and the odds on offer clearly visible.

POKER JOKER

Bert and Sid are enjoying their twice weekly game of poker. "Did you know they're doing Viagra as eye-drops now?" says Sid. "What's the point of that then?" mutters Bert. "You don't get an erection but it makes you look hard!"

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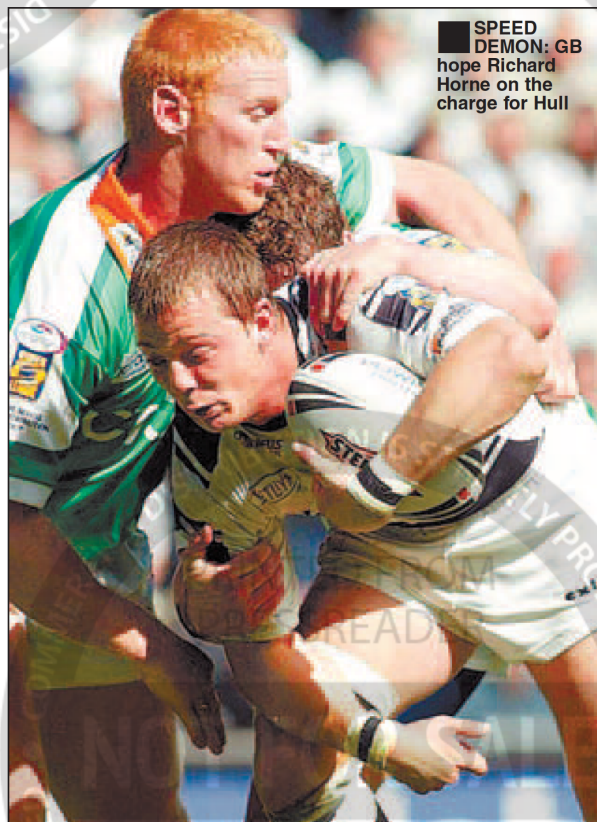
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GREAT BRITAIN v NEW ZEALAND: Hull ace's licence to thrill

BLOW KIWIS AWAY HORNE



SPEED DEMON: GB hope Richard Horne on the charge for Hull

RICHARD HORNE is primed to turn up the heat on New Zealand after winning a recall to the Great Britain colours yesterday.

The Hull half-back's pace and direct running style will be key weapons in the Lions' search for the convincing victory they need at Huddersfield tomorrow to keep them in the Tri-Nations tournament.

Horne, who won the last of his eight caps in the 2003 Ashes series, has been drafted into the 18-man squad and will definitely be in coach Brian Noble's final 17 which will be announced an hour before kick-off.

Noble is also ready to give winger Leon Pryce a more influential role as Britain bid to exert maximum pressure on a Kiwi side which has a habit of switching off in games.

The British half-backs have been criticised for too much lateral running in the defeats to the Kiwis and Australia, but Horne can change all that.

Attack

His Hull coach John Kear said: "Richard is just the type of pivot we need for this game because he is very quick and takes the line on."

"He will cause major problems for the big Kiwi forwards."

"Unlike the present half-backs, he goes to the line and we have to attack the Kiwis."

"They have massive forwards, which is both a strength and a weakness because they will tire if Britain keep turning them round with good ruck speed - and Richard will help give them that."

"I reckon Britain have a very good chance, because I sense that New Zealand probably think they are already in the final. If we can get a roll, we can win by over 20

by **MARTIN RICHARDS**

points and that will set us for the game against the Aussies the following week.

Horne's last appearance for the Lions was on the wing, but Noble said he would be closer to the action this time. Iestyn Harris could be the man he replaces.

Noble said: "He's a good rugby player. He brings speed, a line break and a depth of kicking game to the team. He's a threat."

"We were caught cold the first week, but we improved massively last Saturday and weren't far off a win."

Improve

"They understand that to get a win they've got to improve a little bit more. They're very determined. They're not talking about points difference or mathematical equations, because it won't mean anything unless we get a win."

SQUAD: Wellens; Carney, Gleeson, Senior, Pryce; Harris, Horne, Deacon; Fielden, Cunningham, Morley, Peacock (capt), Johnson, Sinfield, Higham, Thackray, Ellis, Walker.

INSIDE RUGBY LEAGUE by MARTIN RICHARDS

IMPORTS HIT YOUNG STARS



MILLWARD: Worry

IAN MILLWARD is dead right to call for a strict quota of three overseas players per club if Britain are ever to match Australia at half-back - an area where the Kangaroos again had the edge last Saturday.

That area has been the biggest selection headache for GB coach Brian Noble in this Tri-Nations. Wigan coach Millward said only five clubs had British half-backs last season when the emphasis should be on bringing the youngsters through.

He reinforced his point by saying that one Super League club

will have 11 overseas players on its books next year and the competition would have a total of 120 imports.

A sizeable proportion of these imports are half-backs, denying home-grown youngsters their chance.

Pressure

Too often in recent years we've used loose-forwards at stand-off and where are the contenders to put pressure on scrum-halves Sean Long and Paul Deacon?

In contrast, the Aussies have Craig Gower, Scott Prince,

Darren Lockyer and Trent Barrett on tour with them and can afford to leave the likes of Matt Orford, Brett Kimberley, Brett Finch and Player of the Year Johnathan Thurston at home.

Lockyer is out of the competition with injury and Barrett is also a doubt, but they can move Prince back to stand-off in partnership with Gower and then snatch Craig Wing, one of the best dummy-half runners in the business, off a Hawaii beach to add to their replacements.

If only we had such luxuries.

BARRIE McDERMOTT goes on holiday with his best pal Terry O'Connor, plus families, this weekend and you can bet that "Tez" will be down McDermott's ear trying to persuade him to come of retirement and help Widnes Vikings get back into Super League at the first attempt. McDermott wanted to play on for another year at Leeds but the Rhinos preferred him to join the coaching staff.

CASTLEFORD'S Grand Final hero Brad Davis, whose man-of-the-match performance took the Tigers back into Super League, is staying on as assistant to new coach Terry Matterson. North Queensland Cowboys skipper Travis Norton, Parramatta forward Joel Reddy and Manly half-back Michael Monaghan are said to be targets.

ST HELENS have appointed former Cronulla, St George, Huddersfield and Bradford back-forward Alan Wilson as technical adviser.



MIGHTY MIKE: England ace Tindall

We're Tin it to win it

MIKE TINDALL has warned his teammates they will have to beat Australia not just once but twice if they are to get back to winning ways at Twickenham.

One year after his last appearance for England against the Aussies, Tindall is back to terrorise the midfield – and he knows just how hard it will be to win.

The Gloucester centre has faced Australia six times during his 41-cap England career and, having won four of them, he understands what it takes to topple the Wallabies.

Tindall said: "From the word go, we'll

■ by DEAN WILSON

know we are in an international match against the Aussies. They are a great side whoever plays for them and they still know how to win.

"When you play Australia it is so hard to pull away from them and when you think you have, they just keep coming back.

"You never feel like you have beaten the Australians until the final whistle goes and you're still in front.

"Until then it is a case of trying to edge ahead over and over and each time they

come back to try and snuff out their attacks.

"It is almost as if you have to beat them twice just to beat them once.

"They don't know the meaning of giving up – and it is the same for us.

"We have to go out there and set ourselves up to build a platform from where we can win the game. That will only happen with a good performance."

Passion

Tindall was injured for most of last season but a move from Bath to Gloucester in the summer has rekindled his passion, while a new England centre partner in Jamie Noon has got the 27-year-old buzzing again.

"Moving to Gloucester brought the enthusiasm back for me and that is so important," Tindall said.

"I can't wait to see how it goes with Noone and how quickly we can get."

EDDIE'S STEADY ON GREGAN

UNDER-FIRE Australia captain George Gregan will face England tomorrow but winger Wendell Sailor has been axed.

Head coach Eddie Jones has made five changes from last week's 26-16 defeat to France as the Wallabies attempt to end

a six-game losing streak – their worst run of results since 1969.

Former rugby league ace Mat Rogers returns from the wing to fly-half, while Matt Giteau slips to the bench.

Queensland's Drew Mitchell takes Rogers' spot, while Mark

Gerrard is preferred to Sailor. In the pack, Hugh McMeniman replaces Mark Chisholm and John Roe comes in for Rocky Elsom. AUSTRALIA: C Latham; M Gerrard, L Tuqiri, M Tuinui, D Mitchell; M Rogers, G Gregan (capt); M Dunning, B Cannon, A Baxter, N Sharpe, H McMeniman, J Roe, P Waugh, G Smith.

Joy for Brits as Tiger tails off

■ by PETER LAING

TIGER WOODS grabbed 10 birdies but still trailed Brits Nick Dougherty and Paul Lawrie in the HSBC Champions tournament in Shanghai yesterday. England's Dougherty and Scot Lawrie, along with Australian Peter O'Malley, led Woods by a shot after the world No.1 picked up three bogeys, including one at the final hole, in his seven-under-par 65.

Despite his slip-ups – and the effort of competing with constant camera clicking – Woods had far more to smile about than Colin Montgomerie. Going into his first tournament since clinching his eighth European Order of Merit, Monty warned he was "physically and mentally whacked".

Form

And that was the way it looked as the Scot struggled to a two-over-par 74, rounded off with a double-bogey six. Scouser Dougherty, who had his first European Tour victory in Singapore in January, was in superb form in Asia's richest-ever event.

He birdied his first three holes, was six under after 10 and finished in real style with a four-iron to six feet for an eagle on the 538-yard 16th.

Dougherty, 23, said: "I'm extremely happy with my game. The progress I made last year is continuing.

"I idolise Tiger Woods. He is everything I would like to be."

Former Open winner Lawrie became joint leader when he finished with his eighth birdie.

Pakistan v England: Vaughan ruled out

TRESCO CAN MAKE MARC

MARCUS TRESCOTHICK was last night given the daunting task of replacing the injured Michael Vaughan as England skipper in the first Test against Pakistan.

Trescott was told that was likely from the moment Vaughan crumpled to the ground in a heap clutching his right knee three days ago in England's match against Pakistan A in Lahore.

England had held out against making a quick decision on whether Vaughan's injury would rule him out of the three-match series, which starts tomorrow.

But it was confirmed last night that he will be unable to lead his Ashes heroes and the job will be filled by Trescott.

The Somerset batsman – who led England to victory in his sole Test in charge in similar circumstances against New Zealand at Lord's last year – knows he has a tough act to follow.

He admitted: "Michael has a superb record as captain and to lose him for the first Test is a major blow."

Honour

"But we can take strength from the fact that we have played some outstanding cricket over the past 18 months and we are all up for the challenge.

"It is always a great honour to lead your country. I have fond memories of doing the job against New Zealand at Lord's in 2004 and I am happy to take on the responsibility again."

This time, Trescott will lead a team which has a vastly different look – particularly in the middle order – to that which beat the Kiwis after Vaughan suffered trouble in the same knee.

Out-of-form Ian Bell is

from RODNEY WHITE in Multan

the most obvious candidate to take the captain's batting spot at No.3 despite the arrival of Essex youngster Alastair Cook, hastily called up from England as cover.

While former captain Nasser Hussain, veteran Graham Thorpe and Mark Butcher were there the last time Trescott led England, now it will be Kevin Pietersen, Paul Collingwood and probably Bell.

Bell, 23, has struggled badly in recent appearances for England and was not chosen for their final warm-up match, where captain and coach were on record as saying the anticipated Test lineup was being fielded.

But he is determined not to let down a team who have hardly had the ideal preparation for what is sure to be a tough series.

"When your captain goes down, it is not a great thing," said Bell. "But we have a good squad and we hope all the guys who are



FROZEN OUT: Vaughan has to sit and watch with an ice pack on his knee while (above) Freddie Flintoff can't help clowning around

not involved stay ready in case they are needed.

"We have enjoyed every minute of the tour so far. When you are in this part of the world you have to adapt very quickly."

Tough

Pakistan are expected to play a specialist spinner, Danish Kaneria, as well as all-rounder Shahid Afridi, alongside a three-man pace attack on a well-rolled and grassed pitch. It looks sure to favour

the batsmen for at least three days.

Pakistan have a point to prove against England, who beat them on their last visit and have won their last six Test series.

"It will be very tough, and England are on a high," said vice-captain Younis Khan. "But all the people who are writing us off are wrong."

"We have proved to the world we are an improving side and we are on our way to the top."

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Chelsea best team to come to old Trafford this season. 18V

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tony of T.H.F.C

can no one shut that big girls blouse morono up? his name childish comments av no place in OUR game, he was VERY quiet at EVERTON wasnt he? WOOLY E.F.C.

wel dun 2 utd, the beta team, u av 2 respect former champs as themselves. Game on! But cfc av stil got the hunga. HE CHELSKI BLUEBOY

Cheers united. Know arsenal broke our record but would have hated chelsea with all their millions 2 have equalled or broken it. Money cant buy history roman!

Dean, forest fan

another daysholiday, thanku very much jose, where was gallias the donkey? 7x

Engraving seen on old building in York: "Man Utd are scum". Jack S

That vieara got some front. If anyone's a cheating son of a bitch its gotta be him. S.Haddock, Bromley

Message 2 Argyle fans: Come join the revolution at St James Park!! I have, I'd agotton what it was like 2 c a decent football team! MikeRich

have u noticed all the fishy people from skatesmouth gone quite cos team playing s****. Up the saints. Shane d, S.F.C

that scruffy little man at chelski said hed x-pact the sack if e lost 3 in a row, well am on ncastle lets c if hes full of apart from d obviours. TOFFI

HATS OFF TO LANCAIRE. NO NOT MAN UTD. LIVERPOOL, ETC. I'M TALKING BOLTON AND WIGAN! COME ON WEST MIDLANDS WAKE UP! UNCLE ALBERT

Although I hate Man U, it was great to see the gob on 'The Bulls' 'One' after his second defeat in a row. By the way Jose, you booted taking Joe Cole off, as he was your most dangerous player.

Your sub policy is susssed, throw 3 on and hope for the best. JohnLF4eva

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MANCHESTER CITY have made a cheeky £500,000 offer for Southampton wonder-boy Theo Walcott, knowing they have no chance if Chelsea, as expected, step in for the £5m-valued 16-year-old.

COLIN HENDRY has been relieved of his duties as Blackpool manager after just 17 months. Reserve team coach Simon Grayson is in temporary charge.

ROTHERHAM midfielder Michael Keane will be out for six weeks after undergoing bowel surgery.

DEBT-RIDDEN Bournemouth are to sell and lease back their Dean Court ground after fans voted overwhelmingly for the scheme in a secret ballot.

EVERTON have loaned former Cambridge keeper John Ruddy to Rushden.

MACCLESFIELD have transferred striker Kevin Townson after failing to establish himself in the first team.

WEST BROM have joined Bolton and Portsmouth in looking at centre-back Marcel Desailly, 36, just back from a stint in Qatar.

BRAZILIAN World Cup winner Carlos Dunga has taken a £1.1m stake in QPR. He bought shares formerly held by ex-chairman Bill Power.

SERIOUSLY football Van Nistelrooy blow for Fergie

IT'S RUUDY BAD LUCK!



SORRY BOSS: Ruud van Nistelrooy has given Sir Alex Ferguson another injury headache

by MARK OGDEN

RUUD VAN NISTELROOY has added to Sir Alex Ferguson's injury headache at Manchester United after suffering rib damage on Holland duty.

Van Nistelrooy, 29, is facing tests at United's Carrington training ground today after pulling out of the Dutch squad for tomorrow's friendly against Italy in Amsterdam.

The £19m striker was forced to jet back to Manchester after suffering the injury in training yesterday.

United boss Ferguson has seen his team's title hopes rocked by long-term injuries to key men Gary Neville, Gabriel Heinze, Ryan Giggs and skipper Roy Keane.

Return

And any lay-off from Van Nistelrooy would leave the Old Trafford boss with just one senior striker in Wayne Rooney as long-term absentees Louis Saha and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer are still on the sidelines.

Ferguson's only good news is that defender Neville is on course to return to the squad in time for the Premiership clash with Charlton at The Valley a week tomorrow.

Eric quit threat

by DAVE ARMITAGE

MISFIT Eric Djemba-Djemba is heading for showdown talks with Aston Villa boss David O'Leary. The Cameroonian international has revealed he is ready to cut and run on his career in England.

Djemba-Djemba arrived from Manchester United in a £1.3m deal 10 months ago after he failed to live up to claims he would be Roy Keane's successor.

But the 24-year-old has made just four substitute appearances for Villa this season and is fed up.

He said: "I want everyone to know that I am fit. I'm a professional but if I'm only here to train every day, then I'm wasting my time."

He is preparing to discuss his future with O'Leary, adding: "If that time comes then I want the manager to be honest with me and tell me I can leave."

"It would be easy for me to go to France because many teams know about me."

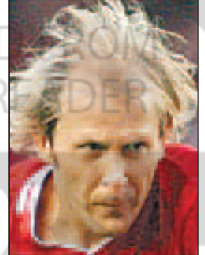
England star Neville has been out of action since tearing his groin during the Champions League win against Debrecen in Budapest three months ago.

But the 30-year-old admits he is determined to prove his fitness ahead of the clash with Alan Curishley's men.

Neville said: "I started training on Monday and I should be fit to play against Charlton but it's going to be hard to get back into the team."

"The likes of myself, Roy, Ryan, Gabriel and Ole now need to get back and help the others."

"When you are injured you feel helpless and I just want to start contributing."



MENDIETA: Recall bid

World hopes on the Mend

by IAN MURTAGH

IN-FORM Middlesbrough midfielder Gaizka Mendietta has trained his sights on reviving his international career and playing in the World Cup.

The Spaniard has been snubbed by his country since losing his form during a disastrous 12 months with Lazio in Italy.

And his hopes of a recall appeared to vanish when he missed virtually all of last season after damaging cruciate ligaments.

But after a spectacular start to the campaign, he is now dreaming of a third successive World Cup appearance.

Spain are overwhelming favourites to beat Slovakia in the play-offs and clinch their place in the finals in Germany next summer.

And Mendietta believes it's not too late to push his own claim.

Finest

He said: "As a player, the World Cup is the biggest event you can be involved in and, even though there's a long way to go for me, I've never lost hope."

"I'd love to be back in the Spain squad."

He added: "Hopefully, everything else will come if I'm doing it for Boro."

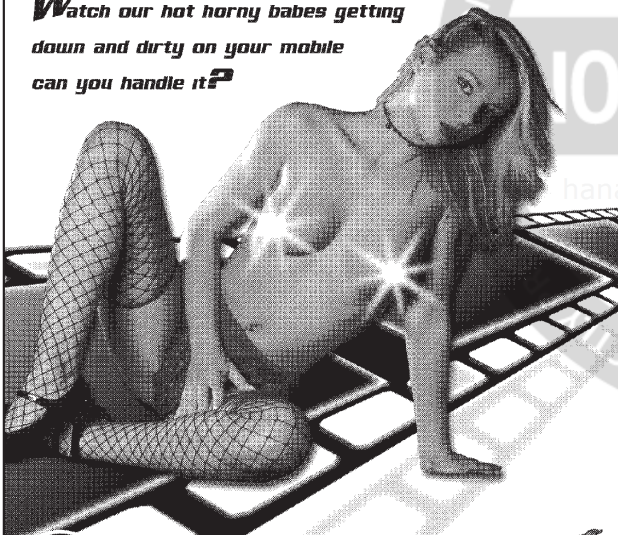
Mendietta's stunning performance in the 4-1 win against Manchester United a fortnight ago was a throwback to his days at Valencia, when he was widely recognised as one of the continent's finest footballers.

"When I scored those two goals against United, it really made all the sacrifices worth it," he admitted.

"It was important to show what I could do in such a big game."

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SPORTWORD

ACROSS

- Scott, former Wales and British Lions centre (5)
- Aston Villa and Czech striker (5)
- 7 and 4 down. Men's 200 metres world champion in 1997 (3,5)
- John, West Ham and Ipswich Town manager (5)
- Steve, QPR and Northern Ireland midfielder (5)
- Smith, Wimbledon men's singles champion in 1972 (4)
- Fowler, Man City striker (6)
- Premiership club based in London (6)
- Clichy, Arsenal defender (4)
- Make of car in which Jim Clark became world champion (5)
- Smith, former Hants and England batsman, brother of Chris (5)
- Chris, ex-Wessex and England wing (3)
- Snooker world champion in 2002 (5)
- Peter, New Zealand athlete who won three Olympic gold medals (5)

DOWN

- Warwickshire and England spinner (5)
- Lane, home of Sheffield United (7)
- Mika, Finnish racing driver (4)
- See 7 across.
- Red, Grand National winner on three occasions (3)
- O'Neill, women's 200 metres freestyle Olympic champion in 2000 (5)
- Titus, Newcastle United defender (7)
- Tom, Open golf champion on five occasions (6)
- Women's javelin Olympic champion in 1988 (5)
- Ivan, Czech born former tennis player (5)
- Kin, Derby winner in 2003 (4)
- Edgar, former show-jumper, husband of Liz (3)

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TIME FOR A TRUCE: Mourinho and Wenger have been told to end their row

EXCLUSIVE
by DAVID WOODS

ARSENAL and Chelsea have agreed the squabbling between their bosses Arsene Wenger and Jose Mourinho must stop.

The League Managers' Association stepped into the dispute last week amid fears the FA and Premier League could crack down hard on both managers.

Last night, the LMA's chief executive John Barnwell revealed: "We have spoken to the important people in both clubs and the consensus was that both clubs want to draw a line under it."

Wenger and Mourinho's rowing

No Mour feuding

looked set to get out of hand. Portuguese coach Mourinho called his French rival a "sick voyeur" with a Chelsea obsession.

The Arsenal boss responded by labelling Mourinho "stupid" and threatening legal action.

Barnwell added: "We have been in consultation with the Premier League and the FA because we hoped it would not be necessary for them to take the matter further. We defend

the right for managers to have an opinion and that they should be allowed to express that opinion but they must also act in a professional manner.

Bed

"There are regulations, both at the Premier League and FA, which could have been invoked.

"But they gave us an opportunity to try to deal with it and hopefully the matter can now

be put to bed." Wenger and Mourinho have previously been punished for outbursts by the FA.

In March, Mourinho was fined £5,000 for claiming Manchester United players had cheated in their League Cup clash at Stamford Bridge.

Last December, Wenger was fined treble that for making a similar suggestion about United's striker Ruud van Nistelrooy.

It's all over as Thatcher is snubbed

by GEORGE SCOTT

BEN THATCHER'S international career looks over after he was snubbed by Wales manager John Toshack for next Wednesday's friendly with Cyprus in Limassol.

Toshack and the 29-year-old Manchester City full-back fell out before Wales' final two World Cup qualifiers last month. Thatcher didn't want to travel to Cardiff to have an ankle injury assessed. As a compromise, the left-back was seen by a national team doctor in Manchester.

Then the two had a phone row in which it was claimed that the player did not want to play against Poland, after his ban following an alleged stamping incident when the countries met in October 2004.

Thatcher claimed that Toshack accused him of being "scared". He said at the time: "I won't be spoken to like that. The manager has questioned my commitment and credibility in public."

Ended

The former Spurs and Wimbledon man declared himself unavailable for the Northern Ireland and Azerbaijan matches – both won by Wales, but stressed he wanted to play again for Wales. Toshack has now ended all hope of that.

SQUAD: P Jones (Wolves), Margetson (Cardiff), Price (Ipswich), D Collins (Sunderland), J Collins (W Ham), Delaney (A Villa), Duffy (Coventry), Edwards (Wolves), Gabbidon (W Ham), Page (Coventry), Partridge (Bristol C), Ricketts (Swansea), G Roberts (Tranmere), Fletcher (W Ham), Koumas (Cardiff), Robinson (Sunderland), Vaughan (Crewe), Williams (W Ham), Bellamy (Blackburn), Earnshaw (W Brom), Hartson (Celtic).

☐ DWIGHT YORKE only has to glance across the dressing-room at Sydney FC and dream of World Cup glory. The 34-year-old striker's club coach is Pierre Littbarski, who helped West Germany lift the trophy in 1990. Despite a glittering career with Manchester United, Yorke has never scaled the heights at international level.

☐ That could soon change as Trinidad and Tobago are two games from a place in the finals for the first time. They face Bahrain in the first leg of a play-off tomorrow and Yorke is in form with five goals in eight starts for the Australian club. Littbarski said: "Everyone at Sydney is hoping he can make it because he has been great for us."

5 FOR FUN

- 1 Ruben Wiki, who recently became the most capped rugby league international of all time, plays for which country?
- 2 Name the former Arsenal midfielder who is Paul Gascoigne's assistant at Kettering Town.
- 3 Name the last Englishman to manage an FA Cup-winning team.
- 4 On which golf course would you find the Ben Hogan Bridge?
- 5 With which sport would you associate the terms 'high house' and 'low house'?

Answers: Page 69

SERIOUSLY
football

Clubs target Venables

RACE IS ON FOR TERRY



VENABLES: On way back

TERRY VENABLES is in demand again – on the domestic and international managerial fronts.

The former England coach, a front-runner to be the new Republic of Ireland boss, is also on Portsmouth's list of possibles.

And Venables, 62, who last worked in management at Leeds nearly three years ago, is also being considered as a future replacement for Neil Warnock, at Sheffield United.

Uneasy

Starsport revealed this week that Pompey are set to sack under-pressure Frenchman Alain Perrin if results don't improve over the next three weeks.

Warnock, who has an uneasy relationship with the Blades board, despite steering United to pole position

by BILL THORNTON

in the Championship, is also on Pompey owner Milan Mandaric's list.

But sources say Venables is the No.1 choice and that Warnock is most likely to end up at Plymouth next season if new boss Tony Pulis doesn't transform their fortunes.

Warnock, who managed Argyle from 1995-97, has a home in Cornwall, where he returns each week, despite the long journey from South Yorkshire.

Venables, who has vast managerial experience after spells at QPR, Barcelona, Tottenham and Leeds, worked at Portsmouth, with Terry Fenwick, in the late 90s.

He is said to be champing at the bit for yet another crack at management and it might be that he is keeping the Republic of Ireland on hold until Perrin's fate is known.

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IT'S A DANNY OLD GAME

Read Chief Football Writer Danny

Fullbrook every Friday

MORE BAR HUMBUG

FA CHIEF executive Brian Barwick has only really been in the public gaze on two occasions.

The first was when he suggested Alan Smith had not done his England career any good by playing for Manchester United reserves instead of August's friendly with Denmark.

The next day, Sven Goran Eriksson apologised for his cock-up and claimed Smith's future was bright, which is why he has been in England squads ever since. So you

would have thought Barwick would have been careful this week in a round of interviews.

But when he was talking about the chances of Wembley being finished in time for the FA Cup final next year, his flippant reply was: "I am not sure which stadium the FA Cup will be at, but one thing's for sure - I will be there."

Great. That's what fans who will end up paying for Wembley through expensive tickets wanted to hear.



BARWICK: Flippant reply

Sven in middle muddle

AT last an England player is brave enough to speak the truth.

Playing a natural central defender as a holding midfielder is not the way for England to take on the world.

But try telling Sven Goran Eriksson that.

After watching Tottenham skipper Ledley King play that role against Poland in the last World Cup qualifier of England's campaign, the Swede has decided that this will be his great tactical masterstroke to play against the most powerful sides next summer.

It was only a few weeks before that though, after beating David Beckham in a withdrawn quarter-back role, he thought the 4-5-1 formation was Plan B for the World Cup.

Sense

And the FA wonder why we think that the £4m-a-season England boss is making it up as he goes along!

Thankfully, someone as experienced as Sol Campbell has seen sense and offered an alternative view.

When asked directly whether a central defender can play the holding midfield role at international level, his answer was: "I really think you have got to be playing there all of the time, or at least in that vicinity."

"To really master the position you need to spend all season there. It's one of the most important positions in the team."

"It is the kind of player you need when going into a World Cup. It's someone who can break down attacks and start attacks for his team."

"You have to be able to look after the lads. It is a crucial role in any team."

Not King then, or Jamie Carragher, one of Eriksson's other alternatives.

Give him a chance and he might have his other favourite, Owen Hargreaves, in the side.

While generally ineffective in an England shirt, at least Hargreaves knows what it is like playing that role for a club as big as Bayern Munich.

King has only ever played there 12 times for Tottenham - and he did not like it.

He is not a natural in that position and to beat the likes of Brazil and Argentina at the World Cup, everything the England players will have to do will be instinctive.

The tactical idea of playing with an out-and-out anchor man is not wrong and

there may not be an outstanding candidate in England's ranks for the role, which has forced Eriksson into this compromise.

But there has to be something better than this. As Campbell quite rightly says, you have to be familiar with the job.

For me, the best alternative would probably be to play Steven Gerrard there at the base of a diamond, or behind a flat three in front of him.

It might take some time leading into the tournament to get him disciplined enough to play that role but, in the weeks at the end of the season, Eriksson will have that. Gerrard is now mature enough

to handle the tactical change and will have to curb his attacking instincts for the sake of the country.

Otherwise, give Scott Parker a chance. Apparently he gives the ball away too much - but then so did King against the Poles.

If Eriksson persists with this foolhardy notion, then here is another suggestion.

Of all the central defenders now fit and experienced at playing for England, Rio Ferdinand is considered to be the best on the ball.

Calm

He proved at the last World Cup how calm and composed he is under pressure.

Ferdinand may not be in his best form and Eriksson was right to drop him for the Austria game.

But he can certainly play and grew up as a midfielder in his early teens, until he was moved back to a central defensive role.

His early coaching in that position, though, explains why he can be so dangerous coming out of defence - and why he has an eye for a pass.

It is odd to see why Eriksson considers King to be a better option in that position than Ferdinand.

But then again, a lot of Eriksson's decisions over the last five years have been bizarre.

You can just add this latest one to the list.

Do you agree with Danny or do you have a different opinion? Let him know your views. Text DSDANNY followed by a space then your views to 61616. Texts cost 25p plus normal operator rate. Or e-mail danny.fullbrook@dailystar.co.uk

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WRONG MAN: Ledley King

**SERIOUSLY
football**

ENGLAND v ARGENTINA: Rival hails hitmen

STRIKER DELIGHT:
Owen celebrates a goal
with Rooney and (inset) is
chopped down by Ayala in
France 98



OWEN & WAYNE ARE BEST IN WORLD

says Argentina hardman ROBERTO AYALA

ROBERTO AYALA last night admitted Argentina are expecting a rough ride at the hands of Michael Owen and Wayne Rooney tomorrow.

The Argie defender claims England's Owen and Rooney partnership is the best combination in world football.

And the Valencia legend should know - he has first-hand knowledge of Owen.

Ayala was one of the defenders the Newcastle striker rounded as an 18-year-old on his way to scoring that stunning goal in the 1998 World Cup.

And although England and the Argies are arch-enemies, Ayala can't speak highly enough of Owen and wonderkid Rooney.

He said: "England are very strong. They have many skills and it will be a very good test for this team."

"Owen and Rooney are very special - they are very important and probably the best partnership in the world."

■ **by DANNY FULLBROOK**

"Rooney is a remarkable player. He is the best talent I have seen in a long time. He is not a typical English player - he is very special."

"He has great movement, vision and passing. He scores spectacular goals and has a temperament as well."

"All of the big players have a temper. You need that to be special. If you take it away, you take away the player."

Talented

"He can do special things at the World Cup. I saw him at Euro 2004 and he was so young and yet so talented that he was probably the best player in the tournament."

"England now have a player who can give them something special, something different, and that will make them successful. He is unpredictable."

"To win tournaments you need big players. Brazil have many special players - Ronaldo, Ronaldinho and

Robinho, Italy have Totti. That is what sets them apart and now England have another."

"Everyone remembers Owen for the goal he scored in France 98 and it was a great goal which marked him down as a great player."

"But Owen will not want to be remembered for that goal alone. He must not be if he wants to be successful for England."

"Success at a World Cup means winning the trophy for countries like England and Argentina."

"He was fresh, exciting and young. Now time has passed and people know he has the talent - we definitely do. He is a great player who will give defenders problems with his pace."

"Owen has now played for a big club like Real Madrid and proved he can score goals and will be a better player for that now."

Ayala believes England's main problem is the burden of their history. He added: "England have two

brilliant forwards and they have a midfield among the best in the world as well."

"But it has been a long time since they have played to their potential at a World Cup and that is what is holding them back."

"They could not take it further. It seems they can raise their game for battles against Argentina because they are such special matches because of the history between the countries."

Chance

"But to be really special is to go on and win the tournament."

"They played well against us in the last World Cup and they were motivated to win."

"But they were not good enough to win the tournament. They have a better team now, the tournament is in Europe and they have a chance."

"We would love to play them again next summer. Whoever would win that match can definitely win the trophy."

Information Station

GOLF

European Tour HSBC Champions
Tournament (Shanghai) - 1st rd leaders (GB and Iri unless stated, par 72): 64 N Dougherty, P O'Malley (Aus), Paul Lawrie, 65 D Howell, R-J Derksen (Ned), T Woods (USA), Ki Choi (Kor), 66 M Campbell (Nzl), K Ferrie, 67 N O'Hern (Aus), T Jaidee (Tha), T Bjorn (Den), V Singh (Fil), T Wirthachant (Tha), Z Lian-wei (Chn), I Poulter, P Casey, 68 S Wakefield, R Lee (Nzl), C Schwarzel (SA), J Bickerton. Selected others: 69 P Harrington, 70 M A Jimenez (Spa), T Levett (Fra), L Westwood, N Fasth (Swe), G McDowell, 72 S Webster, 73 P McGinley, B Lane, S Dodd, S Lyle, 74 C Montgomerie, 75 N Cheelham, 76 P Broadhurst, M Warren, 77 B Dredge.
Japan Tour VISA Masters (Taiheyo Golf Club) - 1st rd leaders (Jpn unless stated, par 72): 65 G Greene (Nrl), H Kase, C Pena (USA). Selected others: 74 J Leonard (USA), 75 B Watson (USA).

SNOOKER

Malta Cup (Prestatyn) - final qualifying rd: R Millkins (Eng) bt J Cope (Eng) 5-3, D Dale (Wal) bt R Walden (Eng) 5-1, A Carter (Eng) bt M Campbell (Sco) 5-3, G Greene (Nrl) bt R Day (Wal) 5-1, N Bond (Eng) bt F O'Brien (Iri) 5-3, J Wattana (Tha) bt M Judge (Iri) 5-2.

TENNIS

WTA Tour Ch'ships (Los Angeles) - Group A: L Davenport (USA) bt P Schnyder (Swn) 6-3 7-5, Group B: M Pierce (Fra) bt E Dementieva (Rus) 6-2 6-3, A Mauresmo (Fra) bt K Clijsters (Bel) 6-3 7-6 (7-4).

FOOTBALL

European U-21 Ch'ship
Play-Off First Leg
Czech Rep v Germany (6.45)
England v France (7.30)
Hungary v Italy (7.30)

Coca-Cola League One

Swindon v Bristol City

Coca-Cola League Two

Grimsby v Macclesfield

Manfield v Bury

Rushden & Ds v Boston Utd

Bell's Scottish League - Division Two: Ayr v Raith, Division Three: East Stirling v Queens Park (7.30)

RUGBY UNION

International

Wales v Fiji (7.05)

Guinness Premiership: Newcastle v London Irish (7.45), Sale v Worcester (8pm)

YESTERDAY'S SPORTWORD

ACROSS: 1 Gilbert, 7 Heath, 8 Baker, 9 Botham, 10 Cort, 12 Lomu, 14 Warren, 17 Rugby, 18 Agori, 19 Williams. **DOWN:** 1 Grant, 2 Lehman, 3 Ebbw, 4 Tokyo, 5 The Belfry, 6 Britannia, 11 Camara, 13 Magri, 15 Roots, 16 Eyal.

FIVE FOR FUN

1 New Zealand, 2 Paul Davis, 3 Joe Royle (Everton 1995), 4 Augusta (home of US Masters), 5 Clay pigeon shooting.

Taylor injury shaker

■ **by ALISTAIR GRANT**

PETER TAYLOR was defiant last night despite HALF his England Under-21s team being ruled out of their crunch tie with France.

Charlton's ace midfielder Jerome Thomas became the latest crock to pull out of the European Championship play-off at White Hart Lane tonight and in Nancy on Tuesday.

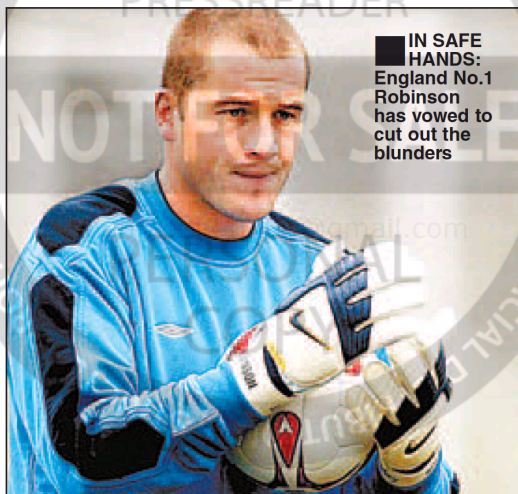
West Ham midfielder Nigel Reo-Coker, Spurs winger Aaron Lennon, Newcastle defender Steven Taylor and Wigan left-back Leighton Baines are also set to miss out.

But Hull boss Taylor insisted: "Our confidence is high despite the injuries."

Charlton forward Darren Bent and Manchester United midfielder Kieran Richardson have dropped down to the U21s and now have the chance to impress Sven Goran Eriksson.

France include Arsenal's Gael Clichy and Chelsea midfielder Lassana Diarra.

ENGLAND (probable): Carson (Liverpool); Taylor (Wigan), Dawson (Tottenham), Ferdinand (West Ham), Whittingham (Aston Villa), Ambrose (Charlton), Huddleston (Wolves), Richardson (Manchester United), O'Neil (Portsmouth), Bent (Charlton), C. Cole (Chelsea).

**SERIOUSLY
football****COUNTDOWN TO ENGLAND V ARGENTINA: Eriksson****CROUCHY**

IN SAFE HANDS:
England No.1 Robinson has vowed to cut out the blunders

Robbo's No.1 goal to keep gaffes at bay

PAUL ROBINSON has vowed there is no way he will copy David Seaman's pony-tail hairstyle – or his blunders.

Arsenal legend Seaman finished the last World Cup in tears as he allowed Brazil star Ronaldinho's freak free-kick to catch him out – and send England crashing out.

David James took over for almost two years, but now Robbo is England's confirmed No.1 – and he plans to keep away from as many dodgy hairstyles, and mistakes, as possible.

Both Yorkshiremen, the Tottenham keeper has turned to Seaman for advice in the past, but Robinson is delighted his big mate has finally ditched the pony-tail live on TV for charity.

Robbo said: "I still speak to Dave. I play in his golf tournament and still see him now and again. He's been an excellent goalkeeper over the years and if I can achieve as much as he did over my career I'll be very happy."

"I just get the odd call and text message, just to say 'keep going' and stuff. He's just good to have around. Getting his hair cut was well before time as that is one thing I will not be copying!"

When Seaman's mistake against Brazil was mentioned, Robbo added: "You have to be very mentally strong. You are there to be shot at and that's part of the game you just have to accept."

Critic

"You just have to make sure it doesn't happen and if it does happen – maybe for reasons that are out of your control, nobody means to do it – you have to expect the criticism that will follow."

"You have to be a strong person and, maybe to become the England No.1, you have to be harder on yourself. You have to be your own biggest critic. The day you start to listen to other people outside your coaches and your manager, that's when you've got a problem."

"The World Cup is the biggest stage for every footballer. Every kid dreams of playing there. It's an old cliché, but I'm no different."

"You can't go into games thinking about the impact of a mistake. If you go into games worried about that, thinking 'what'll happen if I do this or do that?' you'll be finished before you've started. Every game's got to be positive and I'm confident in my own ability."

"I've always wanted to be the No.1 and I've always aspired to be. It was what I dreamt of when I was growing up, although you never think it's

by DANNY FULLBROOK

going to happen. When it did, it was a case of realising what I'd done and working hard to stay there."

Robinson produced a brilliant save from John Hartson in the Wales game, which turned out to be crucial with England winning only 1-0 and then going on to lose against Northern Ireland.

But then in recent weeks he has made mistakes against both Manchester United and Arsenal, which has proved he is as human as any other goalkeeper.

He added: "It's a very lonely position. When you make a mistake there are not generally many people behind you to help."

"A big part of the goalkeeper's game is learning from your mistakes. A lot of it is self-taught and you learn from your own mistakes by watching videos and things. I don't think you can just brush things under the carpet. You have to get to the bottom of what happened."

"Once it's happened it's gone."

On Monday morning you'll look at the video again, but at the end of the day, whatever's done is done. If you start letting it affect you, it affects you during the game."

"Playing for the national team, you have just got to limit your mistakes and make sure that it doesn't happen. I've had two isolated incidents recently, but hopefully it's gone now."



ROO'S HAVIN' A LAUGH: Wayne Rooney has to leap in the air to high five Peter Crouch in training

goal king puts his faith in boo boys' target



CAN BE HIGH AND MIGHTY

says MICHAEL OWEN

MICHAEL OWEN looked up to Peter Crouch yesterday – and down on anyone who doesn't think England can win the World Cup.

Owen chose the build-up to tomorrow's intriguing test against Argentina here to make his strongest defence yet of the players Sven Goran Eriksson will take to Germany next year.

That includes Crouch, the £7m bean-pole striker who has yet to score for Liverpool and who is ridiculed by fans up and down the country.

Owen, more relaxed than he has been for years and clearly loving his return to the Premiership with Newcastle, says Crouch and England are going to surprise the doubters.

"People knocking Crouch simply don't understand what he brings to teams," says Owen. "Those who play with him all can't be wrong."

"I have spoken to my three closest friends from my days at Liverpool – Dietmar Hamann, Steven Gerrard and Jamie Redknapp – and they all say he is very good."

Different

"When he starts to score goals and hit top form he will surprise a few people. Maybe he lacks confidence and I do get the impression that the criticism might affect him."

"For some players it is like water off a duck's back and clearly the criticism is not helping Crouch. There will be a lot of people in the game not surprised when he starts scoring."

"You can't compare him to other strikers because he is a different type. The Premiership has also changed and Crouch is definitely someone who can hurt certain defences in different circumstances."

England coach Eriksson clearly wants to take Crouch to the World Cup as an 'alternative' striker when things



from BRIAN WOOLNOUGH in Geneva

go wrong and don't be surprised to see the 6ft 7ins striker come on against Argentina tomorrow night. He is lined up to be England's supersub.

This is a match Eriksson wants to win to boost morale and confidence and Owen makes it clear, as he heads towards his third World Cup and fifth major tournament, this is the best England team he has known.

He said: "The first time I played against Argentina was in 1998 when we were experienced, with a lot of senior players at their last big tournament."

"In 2002, when we beat Argentina, we were not so experienced. At the moment we are in the middle and getting better."

"This side has a bit of everything, the ability is fantastic. Make no mistake, this is a top team."

"We have no fear of anyone and that includes Argentina and Brazil. We are not out to prove a point against Argentina although of course it would be good to win. Everything rolls into one when an England team is winning. When you lose, question marks crop up everywhere."

"How we play is just as significant as the result. Now we have qualified we have to move collectively forward. We can gauge how we are doing against one of the top sides."

"I like to look at other countries and wonder how they are feeling. Do Italy and Spain say the same things when they lose or go out of a World Cup. It is not right for people to think we are the only team with deficiencies."

"Yes, it's heartbreaking to go out of

tournaments on penalty shoot-outs but we are not the only ones who exist, not the only ones who hurt. Other nations feel as low as us."

"Every country at this moment is thinking of winning the World Cup. There can only be one winner."

"If you asked the entire world most would say Brazil. Yes, they have great attacking players, but we have some of the best defenders in the world. I'd fancy us to score against them."

"This Argentina match will be great because both sides will fancy it. A lot of teams realise they are not so good as their opponents and make it difficult. They attempt to spoil and make it horrible to watch and play in. It is no coincidence that when Argentina, Brazil or Germany meet England they are great contests."

Attitude

"The game has got faster, players are fitter and more tactically aware and it's becoming more difficult to beat lowly sides. Argentina have not come here to defend and, like us, they will want to beat one of the top nations heading towards the World Cup."

Owen is happy to be home and it shows in his attitude and football. He is scoring goals and enjoying renewing his old England partnership with Alan Shearer. "We both know what each other are about. He's in his final year and it's great to be alongside him."

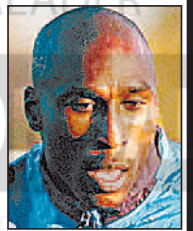
"I have partnered many different players and it's good to play with a big, strong fearless partner like Alan. It has been enjoyable and I'm loving my football at the moment."

No Shearer tomorrow for England. First Wayne Rooney alongside Owen and then another glimpse of Crouch. Owen tells us not to worry and that it will all come good in Germany."

In the new confident mood he showed yesterday, we must believe him.



LITTLE 'N LARGE: Owen gets a pat from Crouch after scoring against Colombia in New York this summer



CAMPBELL: Left out

Rio's in as Sol is axed

From Back Page
had faith in Ferdinand, and drafted him straight back into the squad after he served his eight-month ban and missed Euro 2004 for failing to turn up for a drugs test.

But even Eriksson looked like he had had enough of his indifferent form and was going to give Campbell a run in the team, after he helped Arsenal qualify for the Champions League knockout stages. Obviously the Swede has decided to give the world's most expensive defender just a slapped wrist, in a bid to provoke a positive reaction.

Hurt

Ferdinand admitted he never saw the axe coming ahead of the Austria game and was hurt, but vowed to win his place back.

The selections also confirm John Terry's place as Eriksson's No.1 central defender.

Rio trained yesterday at United's Carrington complex in the first eleven, before flying out with the rest of the squad to Switzerland.

Ledley King also came through the session unscathed, along with flu victim Frank Lampard.

Eriksson is clearly prepared to take a risk with Bridge, who has played only one first-team game for Chelsea this season.

A Real chance

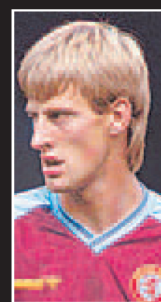
From Back Page
tomorrow night "fantastic, unbelievable and mentally strong".

Owen rates it as the best England side he has played in. "If this team plays to its maximum, with everyone on song, than it can beat anyone."

"We don't fear any side, and that includes Brazil and Argentina."

"We all have to peak together but we have a great chance of going to Germany and winning."

Owen, clearly loving his move to Newcastle, added: "If we beat Argentina it will guarantee a great send-off for the team and raise the confidence and expectancy of the whole country."



ORMONDROYD: Fan

Stick with tall guy, Sven

THE last player to get the Peter Crouch treatment believes the Liverpool ace is a cert to go to the World Cup.

And 6ft 5ins, Ian Ormondroyd – nicknamed 'Sticks' because of his long, spindly legs – believes Crouch will never get the respect he deserves.

"That's the way it is when you are so tall," says the former Bradford, Leicester

by DAVE ARMITAGE

and Derby striker who spent time under former England boss Graham Taylor at Aston Villa – just like Crouch.

"Peter probably already knows he can't do things and get the same credit as a little fella gets."

"When I was at Villa, the gaffer said that if I ran down the wing, passed a

defender and then put a cross into a great position and no-one was there, I'd get booted."

"But Tony Daley could do exactly the same and put his cross into the crowd and get applauded. He just looked stylish while I was never going to."

Ormondroyd believes £7m Anfield star Crouch could turn out to be Sven Goran Eriksson's secret

weapon and already has one size-12 foot on the plane to Germany.

"All he needs is a goal. I can understand everything he is going through, but he's a much better player than I was."

Ability

"Peter has an awful lot of ability and he's got an eye for goal. I don't think he'll ever be prolific but he'll

get enough and his contribution to the team will be more than enough."

Ormondroyd, now with Bradford City's football in the community scheme, added: "I think Crouch has a lot more than people want to see."

"He's had stick but I think he's a really good player."

"No-one would relish playing against him."

England are **REAL** deal roars Owen

■ from BRIAN WOOLNOUGH in Geneva

MICHAEL OWEN has told England fans to get ready for the **REAL** deal at the World Cup next year.

Owen says England are so good they are much better than the Real Madrid squad he has just left behind to return to the Premiership with Newcastle.

"Madrid have the Galactico thing with a team of world class players, but so do England. The rest of the Madrid squad are hard working pros, not a patch on the England players underneath the first team.

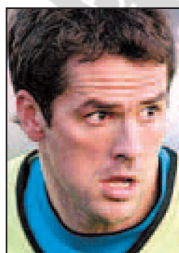
Play

"It is hard to compare and would be interesting to see Chelsea play England or Real take on Spain.

"It can't happen. I just know the 23 in this England squad are top, top players."

Owen calls the England team who begin their World Cup countdown against Argentina here

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OWEN: Better than Real

SVEN GOES FOR RIO



But fit-again Sol's snubbed by boss

RIO FERDINAND has been given a second chance by Sven Goran Eriksson — at the expense of Sol Campbell.

The Manchester United defender will start for England against Argentina tomorrow here, alongside John Terry.

And Wayne Bridge will make a remarkable return after pipping Phil Neville and Paul Konchesky to the left-back spot.

Blow

The choice of Ferdinand will be a huge blow for fit-again Arsenal strongman Campbell, who probably assumed he would be back in the team.

Ferdinand was publicly dropped and humiliated by Eriksson in front



CAMPBELL: Making way for Rio

■ from DANNY FULLBROOK in Geneva

of the rest of the England squad before last month's World Cup qualifier against Austria.

But he came on in the second half when Campbell was injured, and subsequently played against Poland.

Eriksson had given Ferdinand the slapping down because he was concerned about his form, and upset by his attitude.

Considering Sir Alex Ferguson has also spoken about his defender's form, and embarrassingly substituted him in the dismal defeat by Lille in the Champions League, it is a huge gamble by Eriksson.

He has always

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